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Making The Grade #39: A Cool Coin is Lost; Collecting Stardust; plus – New Purchases

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Another Cool Coin Lost... Forever?

Have you ever done something so dumb that you can't believe you just witnessed yourself doing it?

You haven't? Er ... well, this is awkward then.

I was going for a, "Yeah Dave, I've done some really dumb stuff too," sort of vibe here. Anyway, here's what happened with my adventure in stupidity.

A raw coin arrived in the mail for me last week. After I picked it up at the post office, I couldn't wait to see it in hand. So – like the eager genius I am I got into my car, opened the package right away and took the coin out of its 2x2 envelope.

Instantly it slipped through my fingers and fell into a tiny seam in the center console of my car.

One moment it was in my hand; the next – gone like it never existed. If I had 100 more tries I couldn't have dropped another coin into that tiny gap.

When I recovered from the shock of it I furiously tried to get at the coin from various angles, with no luck. In frustration I

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briefly considered turning the car upside down and shaking it until the coin fell out, but that seemed impractical. To recover it will require some major dis-assembly of the interior of my car. I have a good coin friend who fixes up cars for resale who I know could help, but I don't know if I want to subject myself to the ridicule that will most assuredly come with his assistance.

Its not even about the money – I just wanted that damn COIN! For 200 years it survived in delightful shape against all odds. Two world wars, several financial panics, one worldwide depression –it was still pristine. Now in one quick second it is part of a sedan. Ugh.

Here's an Idea: Collect Stardust

Scientists have discovered that every single speck of gold now on earth was the result of one or more collisions of two neutron stars in our galaxy. This likely occurred billions of years ago.

This sounds like something I would make up, but it is absolutely true. Such a collision was first observed last August (during the ANA convention, perhaps?) by astronomers in the US, Germany and Great Britain. In the words of one of those astronomers, Dr. Joe Lyman:

"The observations showed we were observing a kilonova, an object whose light is powered by extreme nuclear reactions. This tells us that the heavy elements, like the gold or platinum in jewelry, are the cinders, forged in the billion degree remnants of a merging neutron star."

Here is a link to the story in Britain's Telegraph: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/10/16/secret-gold-finally-found-precious-metals-forged-cataclysmic/>

Pretty cool, ay?

The Making the Grade Featured Coin

(1860-1867) Japan Gold Koban. PCGS graded AU-55.

JNDA 09-23 Man'en 万 延 variety.3.30 grams.

And now for something completely different. This coin stopped me in it's tracks when I saw it – it is just that beautiful. Gorgeous green-copper-gold in color. Most of these are found damaged or repaired, most likely due to their somewhat delicate nature. I'd be willing to bet most serious coin collectors do not have even one Koban in their collection. Here is your chance – and it is a real looker too. PCGS #392755. \$1250.

New Listings

1652 Pine Tree Sixpence. PCGS graded AU50.

Salmon 2-B, Noe-33, rarity-3. Perfectly centered on the date side, and a bit off the flan on the tree side, as always found. PCGS # 22. \$7500.

1833 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded Very Fine-30.

O-101, considered to be rarity-1. An ordinary coin blessed with extraordinary color on both sides. Likely dipped in the past and placed into a sulfur containing coin board, the result is quite pleasing. PCGS #39887. \$250.

1853 Seated Half Dollar. PCGS graded XF45.

Arrows & Rays type. This coin and the next were housed in a Wayte Raymond style holder, with pastel toning being the delightful result. This coin is accompanied by TrueView images. PCGS #6275. \$485.

1874-S Seated Half Dollar. PCGS graded XF40.

With Arrows type. Attractive pastel toning from being housed in a Wayte Raymond style coin board for decades. This coin is accompanied by TrueView images. PCGS #6348. \$525.

1879-1901 Range. Lot of 9 \$10 Liberty Gold Coins. Circulated [uncertified].

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This is a collection of \$10 Libs that was put together in the early 1970's. Normally I would just wholesale this group out because these aren't worth much more than their melt value these days, but it is kinda neat (by my standards, anyway). These were purchased by a collector in the early 1970's from the legendary firm of MTB (Manfra, Tordella & Brooks). MTB was a big importer of US gold from Europe, and also handled many great US gold rarities. Grades range from Choice XF to Choice AU. It looks like the collector paid \$50 or so on average back then, so he did OK. They are certainly not common dates, but in today's coin market they still sell for only a few percent over their gold value. The dates are: 1879, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1894-O and 1901-O.

Just \$685 each = \$6,165 for the group.

World Coins, Exonumia, Flotsam & Jetsam

1717/6 8 Escudos, Spain. NGC graded AU58.

KM-260. The single highest graded coin of this rare date, and the highlight of this list. Flashy luster with russet color peeking around the rims. \$ 8750.

1756 8 Escudos Gold. Peru. NGC graded AU58.

Lima mint, JM assayer. A flashy example of this large and heavy gold coin. \$4950.

1768 8 Reales Pillar Dollar. Guatemala. NGC graded MS61.

Flashy, slightly prooflike surfaces over rich gold-green-blue toning. Pedigreed to the Richard Stuart collection, as stated on the NGC tag. A tough issue in such a high grade. \$4350.

1773 8 Escudos Gold. Spain. NGC graded MS62.

The prooflike fields on both sides give this large gold coin fabulous eye appeal. Perfect for the collector that wants one amazing example of this historic coinage. \$5500.

1797 \$10 Gold Contemporary Counterfeit. Extremely Fine [uncertified].

Likely copper with a gold wash. There are several dates of contemporary counterfeit \$10's known; though they are all quite rare. \$3650.

1805 \$10 Gold Contemporary Counterfeit. Uncirculated [uncertified].

These early \$10 counterfeits are normally seen with some or all of the underlying copper exposed. To find one in such extraordinary condition is unprecedented. \$4500.

1809 2 Escudos Gold. Spain. PCGS graded AU50.

KM-455. Seville mint, CN assayer. Pretty russet toned gold. A n historic gold coin for just \$550.

1855 \$5 Gold Contemporary Counterfeit. Almost Uncirculated [uncertified].

A beautifully crude example of this historic issue. The weight of the coin is 8.1 grams, or about the weight of a genuine gold example. This leads me (and previous owners) to believe that it is actually struck in platinum. Platinum was considered a cheap substitute for gold by counterfeiters in the mid 19th century, though platinum counterfeits of US coins are almost never seen today. Of extreme importance. \$2500.

1861 CSA "Beauregard Dime". NGC graded Very Fine Details.

A prized Civil War rarity. An article published in 1868 noted that these medals were "presented by the city of New Orleans immediately after the first battle of Bull Run." There are fewer than 10 specimens known, and nearly all are impaired in some way. This one is called, "VF Details, mount removed, obverse tooled" by NGC. It actually presents very well. There are several auction records around \$10,000 and above. This one is just \$5750.

(Circa 1800's? 1900's?) \$5 Gold Size Contemporary Counterfeit. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Likely struck in gold (or possibly platinum with a gold wash) this fascinating piece is difficult to categorize. I giant, fat Liberty head on the obverse, an undernourished eagle on the reverse and delightful gibberish for legends, this coin may best be categorized as an imitation. The counterfeiter (or gold smuggler?) was hoping to avoid prosecution under the counterfeiting laws of the time. Quite reasonably priced at \$975.

"1781" (2014) Libertas Americana Medal. Paris Mint Restrike. Silver. 5 ounces. NGC graded Proof- 69 Ultra Cameo.

A large, impressive, heavy silver medal made in the same mint that made them back in 1783. Dealers usually want a lot of money for these popular medals, but every once in a while I am able to buy one at a reasonable price, and when I do I pass it along to you. The last one I offered garnered several orders. \$595.

"1781" (2014) Libertas Americana Medal. Paris Mint Restrike. Gold. 1 ounce. NGC graded "Gem Proof".

A terrific companion piece to the above medal. A 1 ounce rendition of this beautiful medal struck at the Paris mint. A restrike issue of particular importance to collectors of US medals, from a mintage of 5000 pieces. \$1950.

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